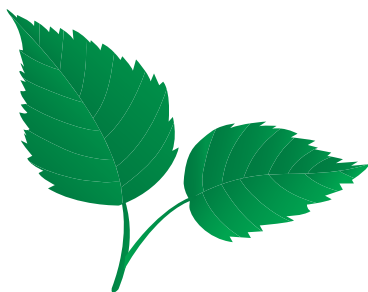




HANDBOOK FOR PARK PALS

Helsinki

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Helsinki

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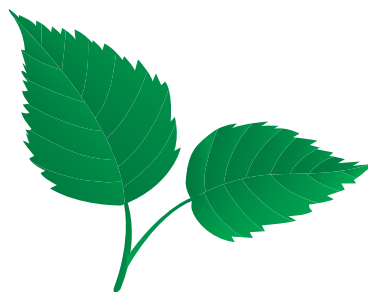
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Special thanks

to all our active Park Pals and colleagues who helped
proofread the text!

CONTENTS



Thank you for volunteering as a park pal!	4
Where do park pals work?	4
Who can become a park pal?	5
Registration	5
Principles of Park Pal activities	6
Practices and organisation of activities	6
Commitment and tasks	6
Reporting on activities	8
Help and support	10
Safety	11
Insurance and liability for damages	12
Communications	13
Giving thanks and perks	13
Good to know about park maintenance	14
Park pal is a ‘park agent’	14
Brochures and Park Pal card	14
Work parties	16
Frequently asked questions	16
Where do I put the litter?	16
What are invasive alien species?	17
I would like to rake at my local park. What should I do?	18
What if a reporter asks questions?	18
Useful sites	19
CONTACT INFORMATION	20

Thank you for volunteering as a park pal!

The voluntary Park Pal activities in the city's green areas are organised by the Helsinki Urban Environment Division. Park pals contribute to taking care of the environment and protecting nature, for example, by picking up litter or weeding out invasive species.

The significance of inclusion is emphasised in the city's activities. A good city is built in cooperation with citizens and they are given the opportunity to influence matters that concern them. The Park Pal activities provide an opportunity to improve one's own living environment and to preserve of biodiversity.

The development of the Park Pal activities started in the Public Works Department in 2005 on the basis of a council initiative. A dedicated brand, *Hyvä kasvaa Helsingissä*, was created for the volunteer and corporate cooperation, and voluntary work was assigned with the motto *Hyvällä asialla*. In 2011, a voluntary work coordinator was hired to coordinate and develop the activities.



This handbook covers the principles and practices of being a park pal.

Where do park pals work?

The work of park pals must always target the public areas owned by the City of Helsinki. Public areas include the city's parks, forests, meadows, banks of water systems, streets and green areas alongside streets. Private plots, such as housing companies' yards, are not included in the scope of the Park Pal activities.

Park pals work mainly in parks and natural areas. It is also possible to work in green areas alongside streets, as long as special care is taken due to

traffic. A park pal who focuses solely on picking up litter is free to choose the work area. If a park pal is interested in other tasks, such as taking care of planted areas with summer flowers or roses, the work can be done at specific locations. More information about these locations is available from the voluntary work coordinator.

Who can become a park pal?

Anyone living in Helsinki or in one of the neighbouring municipalities who wants to do voluntary work in the public areas of Helsinki can become a park pal.

Official communities and registered associations (such as residents associations, daycare centres, schools and companies) can form park pal groups. In this case, someone from the community will register as a contact person and provide his or her details for the park pal register in addition to the name of the community. The contact person will keep contact with the park pal instructor and voluntary work coordinator and report annually to the voluntary work coordinator on the group's park pal activities.

Registration

You can register as a park pal in the Urban Environment Division's customer service (Contact information on page 20 of this handbook). The details of the park pal will be entered in the register in connection with the registration. The details to be entered in the register are the park pal's name, postal address, email address and telephone number required for communication purposes. In addition, we want the park pals to indicate their year of birth so that we can monitor the age breakdown of the park pals. The register can only be accessed by employees of the City of Helsinki who are involved in the Park Pal activities. The data in the register are not disclosed to external parties.



Principles of Park Pal activities

The Park Pal activities are based on voluntariness. The essential precondition for the voluntary activities is that the activities are unremunerated, meaning that the person participating in the activities is not paid any salary or reimbursed for any expenses. Persons participate in the activities as they choose and according to their own motivation. Voluntary activities are carried out for the benefit of the community, the environment or someone who is not your next of kin.

The volunteering principles of the City of Helsinki are followed in the Park Pal activities. These principles include:

- voluntariness and no pay
- distinction between the roles of a volunteer and employee
- confidentiality and secrecy
- reliability and commitment
- equality and reciprocity
- tolerance and non-discrimination
- inclusion and community spirit
- relevance and agency
- commitment to the City of Helsinki's values and volunteering guidelines and principles
- respecting the person and/or party benefiting from volunteering and adhering to the provided instructions
- right to support and guidance
- joy of volunteering

Practices and organisation of activities

Commitment and tasks

It is hoped that park pals will commit to the activities for at least a year. Park pals participate in the activities as allowed by their resources and schedules.

Park pals focus on picking up litter. Littering is one of the greatest problems in view of our environment, and there is plenty of work for anyone interested. In addition to picking up litter, park pals can also carry out other green area maintenance work that does not require the use of motorised tools. Tasks other than picking up litter must be agreed with the voluntary work coordinator. The tasks must observe the use and management plans of the parks.

Self-directed tasks (do not require any initial orientation):

- picking up litter

Other possible tasks (require orientation and guidance):

- weeding, for example invasive species
- removal of water sprouts from trees
- irrigation
- assistance at events
- assistance in forest thinning
- planting
- raking



At their discretion, park pals can also educate people for the benefit of the parks and mould attitudes in order to, for example, reduce littering. This must be done in good spirit and in a matter-of-fact way. When educating people, it is recommended for park pals to identify themselves as park pals.

Hut pals are a special group of park pals and they operate in the Uutela outdoor recreational area in Vuosaari, in a hut erected near the Skata farm. The hut is kept open on weekends to all residents with the help of hut pals. The hut pal tasks include unlocking the door, lighting the fire and keeping it going as well as instructing visitors on the use of the hut. If you are interested in becoming a hut pal, please contact the voluntary work coordinator.



The **City Garden** makes use of park pals, for example, in taking care of the Rose Garden. The activities take place on summer weekdays from 8:00 to 14:00 and only a very limited number of volunteers can be involved in the activities. You can ask about available spots from the volunteer work coordinator.

Park pals can also assist at various events organised in public areas. Park pals have already provided assistance at, for example, the Kallio Block Party, the international gymnastics event Gymnaestrada and Helsinki Biennial. The voluntary work coordinator notifies park pals by email and on the Facebook and vapaehtoistoiminta.hel.fi pages about events for which volunteers are needed. The addresses of the pages can be found at the end of this handbook.

If you have ideas for expanding the scope of the Park Pal activities and you would like to start doing something not mentioned in this handbook, please contact the voluntary work coordinator. Your proposal may be feasible.

Reporting on activities

Since most park pals operate independently, we hope that park pals will provide a report to the voluntary work coordinator about the activities they have carried out during the year. There are many ways to provide a report. The easiest way to report your activities is to submit an electronic form. A link to the form will be sent to you at the end of the year. If you do not want to use the electronic form, you can also report your activities by email, phone or text message to the voluntary work coordinator. In addition, an annual park pal calendar will be sent to those interested in having one for marking work hours. The calendar includes a form for recording your feedback on the Park Pal activities you have carried out during the year. You can return it by post. The postage has been paid for. The voluntary work coordinator will send the calendar order form to the park pals towards the end of the year.



Hyvä puistokummi!

Puistokummien tekemä työ yhteisten alueittemme hyräks arvokasta. Se lisää ympäristöomme kauneutta ja viihtyisyyttä hyvin tärkeää tehdä tämä näkyväksi ja kertoa siitä päätäjäm medialle, näin toiminta saa sen ansaitseman huomion ja näkyväksi toiminnan tekee ennen kaikkea puistokummit ja kertomalla toiminnastaan.

Puistokummikalenteriin toivomme sinun merkitsevän toimittamasi aika. Tämä on näkyvyyden mittari. Palauteensa saavat kutsun aina vuoden lopulla järjestettävään joulujuhla. Lähetä palaute mieluiten seuraavan vuoden maaliskuuhun mennessä. Voit antaa palautteen postitse ohessa olevalla lomakkeella. Voit antaa palautteen myös sähköpostilla osoitteeseen puistokummit@hel.fi tai puhelimitse numeroon 040-7190824. Palautteessa tulee mainita oma nimensä, jos haluat kutsun seuraavan vuoden joulujuhlaan.

Puistokummitoiminta ja talkoot: vapaaehtoistoiminta.hel.fi
www.facebook.com/helsinginpuistokummit
 Puistokävelyt: helsinginpuistot.fi
 Palaute: www.hel.fi/kaupunkiymparisto/fi/yhteystiedot/ Anna palautetta
 Fanita puistoja: www.facebook.com/puistot

Kansikuva: Kuutamouinti uimastadionilla / Helsingin kaupungin aineistopankki

Nimipäivät © Helsingin yliopiston almanakkatoimisto

Puistokummipalaute 2021

Nimi TERTTU TERHO
 Työtunnit yhteensä 81 h
 Alue, jossa työskentelen KALLIO
VALLILAN PIIRI
 Muu palaute OLEN SAANUT PALJON
KITOSTA PUISTON KÄYTTÄJILTÄ. MINUS-
TA ROSKAAMINEN ON VÄHENTYNYT
- JA KUNTONI KOHENTUNUT.

Työtunnit ja palautteen voit antaa myös
puistokummit@hel.fi, tai soittamalla tai
 tekstiviestinä numeroon 040-7190824,
 1.3.2022 mennessä.

Vastaanottaja
 maksaa
 postimaksun
 Mottagaren
 betalar
 portot

Helsingin kaupunki
 Kaupunkiympäristö
 Info: Hyvis
 Tunnus 5001629
 00003 VASTAUSLÄHETYS

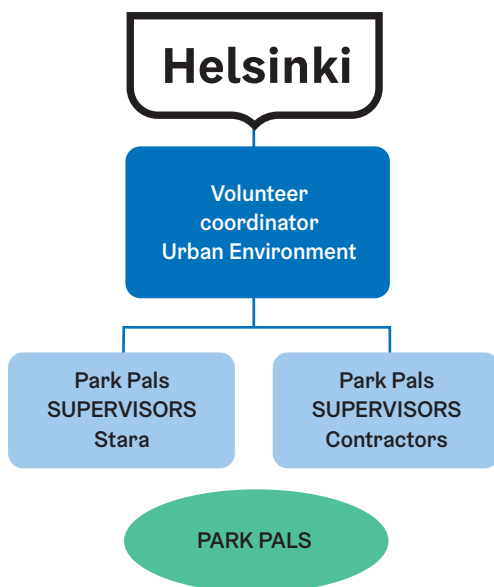
Helsinki

2022

Puistokummikalenteri

Help and support

The Urban Environment Division's voluntary work coordinator and the regional park pal instructors help and support the park pals.



The voluntary work coordinator is responsible for the Park Pal activities in the Urban Environment Division. The coordinator's duties include the development and management of the Park Pal activities.

The voluntary work coordinator maintains contact with the park pals throughout the year by sending bulletins about events via email. If a park pal does not have an email address, the bulletins will be sent by post.

Please contact the voluntary work coordinator

- if your contact information changes or you no longer want to be a park pal, this helps to keep the register up to date
- if you have any development suggestions for the Park Pal activities
- if you want to do something other than picking up litter
- if you cannot reach your park pal instructor.

You can find the contact information on page 20 of this handbook.

The park pal instructors help with practical activities. They are employed either by Helsinki City Construction Services – Stara or by a private contractor, depending on the operator from which the Urban Environment Division has ordered the maintenance of the area in question.

Contact your park pal instructor when you need advice or help, for example, with the removal of litter. You will receive the contact information of the park pal instructor in your area when you register as a park pal.

The park pal instructor can be contacted during working days (Mon–Wed 8–15, Thu–Fri 8–14) by telephone or email.

Safety


Always exercise caution and care to avoid endangering yourself or causing danger to others.

It is recommended to wear the ‘Hyvällä asialla’ high-visibility vest when working. This also allows other people in the area to identify you as a park pal and know the work you are doing. This is important, especially if you are doing something other than picking up litter, for example, taking care of summer flowers. Wearing the vest is very important for safety reasons when working alongside traffic and street areas.

When picking up litter, watch out for sharp objects, such as broken glass and used hypodermic needles. Piles of leaves or litter should not be touched by hand, instead use a rake or litter tongs, and always pick up litter with the tongs.



We recommend that you carry a capped, no-deposit bottle or some other sealable, tight container in which you can put any hypodermic needles you may find. Bottles and containers containing hypodermic needles can be disposed of in a mixed waste bin. Hypodermic needles must not be disposed



of in waste bins or bags without first putting them inside a container to avoid needle injuries when the bags are collected. If you do not have a container for collecting hypodermic needles, leave the needles where you found them and report their location to your park pal instructor or the voluntary work coordinator. If there is a drug needle disposal bin nearby, you can take the needles there. However, do not walk long distances while carrying exposed needles.

For safety reasons, the city does not provide volunteers with motor tools and we cannot authorise the use of own motor tools in public areas.

Insurance and liability for damages

The city has taken a collective accident insurance for park pals. The insurance covers the voluntary work activities and the related to and from trips. In order to be covered by the insurance, your information must be found in the park pal register.

The insurance covers medical care costs within the scope of public health care, such as health centre, outpatient clinic and hospital fees. The insurance also covers medicine and travel expenses. The insurance does not include liability insurance, i.e. it does not cover damage caused to a third party.

Animal bites, such as dog and viper bites, as well as wasp, bee and humblebee stings are also covered, but tick bites are not.

If you are injured while working and incur medical care costs, immediately report the accident to the voluntary work coordinator. The coordinator will send you an insurance claim form. You need to pay the expenses yourself and then make an insurance claim with the receipts.

Park pals do not need to replace broken work equipment. If a piece of equipment breaks down, you can pick up new litter tongs or vests from the Urban Environment Division's customer service. If equipment borrowed from Stara or a contractor breaks down, notify the party in question or the voluntary work coordinator.

Members of park pal groups must be insured by the organisation that they represent, for example a registered association, daycare centre or school. If all the members of the group are to be covered by the insurance of the Park Pal activities, everyone participating in the activities must register as a park pal.

Communications

Information on topical matters and events of the Park Pal activities is provided

- via email or a mailed bulletin if you do not have an email address
- on the Volunteering website at vapaaehtoistoiminta.hel.fi/en/
- through social media (in Finnish)
facebook.com/helsinginpuistokummit
facebook.com/VapaaehtoistoimintaHelsinki
- via the electronic newsletter for volunteering, which you can subscribe to at gruppoo.fi/tilauslomake/vapaaehtoisenuutiskirje.html (in Finnish)

Giving thanks and perks

At the end of the year, the Urban Environment Division gives thanks by inviting all park pals to a joint celebration. The event is all about summarising the past year's efforts and enjoying each other's company, catering and annually changing programme. Over the years we have been to the cinema, theatre and music performances. The event will also be attended by the park pal instructors, the voluntary work coordinator and other representatives of the city who are interested in the activities. You will receive a separate invitation to the event in good time. There are many of us, so you will have to register for the event in order to ensure sufficient catering and facilities.

The City of Helsinki organises training sessions, lectures and recreational events for all volunteers of the city. You can find information about these events and enrolment instructions on the Volunteering website at vapaaehtoistoiminta.hel.fi/ (in Finnish)



Good to know about park maintenance

There are different types of green areas in Helsinki, with different quality levels of maintenance. The quality level defines the maintenance objectives. The green areas are divided into built parks, open areas (fields and meadows) and forest areas. Most maintenance work is done at built parks, which in turn are divided according to their quality level into formal parks, activity/recreation parks and protective green areas.

The aim is to keep natural areas, such as meadows and forests, as natural as possible in order to increase and safeguard biodiversity.

Park pal is a ‘park agent’

A park pal is an additional, active pair of eyes in the field and a great help in the maintenance of public areas. If you notice any damage to structures, furnishings, equipment or vegetation in green or street areas, or if you find large items of waste, report them to the Urban Environment Division’s customer service. Also, if you want to express wishes related to parks and streets, do this through the customer service as well. Your feedback will be directed to the right party. You can find the contact information for the customer service on page 20 of this handbook.

Park pals and all other Helsinki residents can present their park planning ideas in resident surveys and at resident events that are organised from time to time. The city also has an online service called Voice your opinion that allows residents to voice their opinions on and be heard in various matters taken into preparation or being currently prepared. Opinions are available for others to see, comment on and favourite opinions can be voted on. The Voice your opinion service is available at kerrokantasi.hel.fi/?lang=en.

Brochures and Park Pal card

A brochure on the Park Pal activities has been prepared, which the park pals can use if they wish to present their activities. You can carry brochures with

you when you do park pal work. If someone comes up to you asking “What are you doing?”, you can tell them that you are a park pal and ask them if they would like a brochure on the Park Pal activities. Brochures are available from the coordinator or customer service.

In connection with registration, the park pal receives a Park Pal card, which can be used to prove their engagement in the Park Pal activities. It is not necessary to carry the card all the time when doing park pal work. You have to write your own name on the card.



WOULD YOU LIKE TO volunteer in the parks of Helsinki? To register as a Park Pal, visit the Urban Environment Customer Service at Työpajankatu 8. Park Pals help look after their own surroundings and make them even more enjoyable, for example by picking litter. Helsinki's green areas are extremely popular. City workers have their hands full keeping them in good condition.

ON REGISTRATION we will complete an electronic form that enters you in the Park Pal Register. You will also receive a litter picker, a Good Cause fluorescent vest, a calendar for entering your working hours and a Park Pal-card. All Park Pals are covered by a group insurance policy.

THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR is an official who coordinates the Park Pal Activities. Contact the Coordinator if you want to know more.

E-mail: puistokummit@hel.fi
tel. 040 719 0824

Additional information

Park Pal activities:
vapaaehtoistoiminta.hel.fi/en/
facebook.com/helsingipuistokummit
(in Finnish)

Comments on parks and streets:
tel. 09 310 22 111
hel.fi/kaupunkiymparisto/en/feedback/
(in Finnish)

Park fans:
facebook.com/puistot (in Finnish)



Work parties



The city organises various work parties with its partners, to which we also invite park pals. Examples of these are planting work parties, weeding work parties and cleaning work parties. More information on the work parties organised by the Urban Environment Division is available at vapaaehtoistoiminta.hel.fi/en/tasks/activities-for-environment/. The voluntary work coordinator sends work party invitations to the park pals by email.

Park pals can also organise work parties. The removal of invasive alien plant species and the cleaning of green areas are very welcome work parties. Cleaning work parties can be notified at puistotalkoot.hel.fi/en. If a park pal wants to organise a working party for weeding invasive alien plant species, he or she can contact the voluntary work coordinator. It should be noted that the city's insurance covers only the registered park pals, not any other volunteers. Working parties must target areas owned by the city, not privately owned plots. You can ask the volunteer work coordinator for suggestions on working party sites. Work communities can also organise work parties as part of their well-being at work activities.

Frequently asked questions

Where do I put the litter?

- If you are helping to keep parks clean, put the litter you have picked up in the park waste bins.

- If the park has large waste bins or deep collection containers, prioritise their use in disposing of the waste.
- If the park waste bins are full or you have picked up more than one bag full of waste, you can leave the bagged waste next to the waste bin. If there are no waste bins, leave the waste easily located spot. Report the exact location of the waste bags to your park pal instructor no later than on the day following the cleaning. Since bags can only be picked up on weekdays, it is recommended not to leave them lying about on Fridays or Saturdays. Waste bags will attract birds and other animals and may accumulate more litter.

What are invasive alien species?

Invasive species threaten our indigenous wild plants with their aggressive spreading. Invasive alien species include the Himalayan balsam, Japanese rose, knotweeds (e.g. Japanese knotweed and bohemian knotweed), garden lupin and goldenrods.

The city is responsible for the removal of the poisonous giant hogweed. Report all sightings of the giant hogweed to Urban Environment Division's customer service so that removal measures can be carried out to the necessary extent.

Park pals can organise work parties for the removal of invasive species among themselves by agreeing on the work party and waste removal with the voluntary work coordinator.

More information on invasive alien species is available at vieraslaajit.fi/ and at hel.fi/helsinki/en/housing/nature/maintenance/alien-species.



I would like to rake at my local park. What should I do?

If you want to rake green areas as part of your park pal work, you should first contact either the voluntary work coordinator or your park pal instructor. We do need help in raking leaves in the autumn, but first ask where your help is most needed.

There is a new approach on how to deal with leaves in the autumn. Nowadays, the aim is to leave leaves on the ground to decompose, where possible. This way the leaves act as soil conditioners – in the form of humus and green manure. Fallen leaves are not litter. They belong to nature and are important in the biological cycle.

Often, leaves are mulched and mixed with cut grass using a lawnmower or raked to planted areas. In places where the quality standard requires the removal of leaves, leaves are piled into biggest possible piles on the edge of roads and other access routes from where they can be removed with the help of machines. Making small leave piles here and there should be avoided, as removing them is both laborious and time-consuming. Packing leaves in plastic bags should also be avoided, as the process generates unnecessary plastic waste. When raking surfaces with crushed stone fines, care should be taken to avoid mixing stones and sand with leaves. In natural areas, such as forests and meadows, leaves are not raked or even crushed. Instead, they are left to decompose as they are.

What if a reporter asks questions?

The voluntary work coordinator is responsible for liaising with the media and for issuing comments on the Park Pal activities. Naturally, you can tell representatives of the media about your own park pal work, but it is not your responsibility to make communications about the activities as a whole. If media representatives contact you in terms of the Park Pal activities, please direct them to contact the voluntary work coordinator. It is important that just one person liaises with the media.



Useful sites

VAPAAEHTOISTOIMINTA.HEL.FI/EN/

vapaaehtoistoiminta.hel.fi/en/ is the website for the City of Helsinki's volunteering activities, providing information on all the forms of volunteering provided by the city. The website provides information on the Park Pal activities and work parties.

Direct links to the site:

vapaaehtoistoiminta.hel.fi/en/tasks/park-pals/

vapaaehtoistoiminta.hel.fi/en/tasks/activities-for-environment/

PUISTOTALKOOT.HEL.FI/EN

On the puistotalkoot.hel.fi/en website you can notify your own park volunteer cleaning activities. This way, you will get the cleaning equipment on loan and the resulting waste will be removed by the city.

FACEBOOK (in Finnish)

facebook.com/helsinginpuistokummit is a dedicated Facebook page for park pals, sharing information on topical matters. You can also start discussions and ask questions on the page.

facebook.com/VapaaehtoistoimintaHelsinki offers information about all volunteer activities offered by the City of Helsinki.

Kaupunkiluonto Helsingissä, facebook.com/puistot, is a dedicated Facebook page for the green areas in Helsinki. There you can find park event announcements, such as park walks, and topical matters related to the vegetation of the parks.



CONTACT INFORMATION

Voluntary work coordinator,
tel. 040 719 0824, puistokummit@hel.fi

Urban Environment Division, customer service
Tel. 09 310 2211
Street address: Työpajankatu 8, 00580 Helsinki
hel.fi/kaupunkiymparisto/en/feedback



My supervisor's contact info

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Clean Team



We're the Park Pals, yes we are,
Hard at work in the city's parks.
Mornings, evenings, whenever we care,
We head outdoors to enjoy the air.
We have special tools to pick up the trash,
And bright yellow vests that make us match.
Being outside is important to us,
And cleaning the parks is a must.
Just one piece of litter in the morning
Can lead to a pile of it by the evening.
So we clean it away as soon as we see it,
Then everyone else can simply enjoy it.
So join us as a volunteer,
Grab your vest and all your gear.

Find some trash and then some more,
You'll soon discover it's never a bore.
With your cheeks aglow and a smiley face,
You'll be feeling good about this place.
Anyone can join our team,
If you like to keep things clean.
A tidy environment is the key
To happy people and a nice city!

Lauha Pajunen, Park Pal

